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WITH A PREFATORY NOTE

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PREFATORY NOTE.

OWING, in part, to the fact that I have known the collections which are now being exhibited almost from the commencement of their formation, and in part, probably, to the almost affectionate regard in which I hold the works of the Masters in Miniature of the past century, I have been asked to write a few words as a prefatory note to the catalogue of this Exhibition.

I do so with pleasure, not only on account of the excellence of the collections, but because they afford the public an unusual opportunity of seeing specimens of a certain branch of 18th century art-work, the genuineness of which is quite undoubted.

To those who have not only admired and studied this epoch during long years, but have also felt that the time must come when the cultured appreciation of the graphic art of that time, formerly confined to a few, must spread over an ever-increasing area, it is a source of pleasure and satisfaction to note the position now occupied in the public estimation by the refined portraits executed by John Downman, A.R.A.

It seems but comparatively a short time since they could be obtained for a few pounds apiece, but the axioms of political economy have ordained that as the demand has far exceeded the supply, their monetary value has proportionately advanced.

Another result which was perhaps inevitable has followed, namely, that the forger, with a quickness of perception worthy of a better cause, has seen his opportunity, and has profited by it. In this particular class of art-work, imitation, up to a certain point, is not difficult, for Downman's method is simplicity itself. Indeed it has been urged that what is termed his "sketchiness" is an objection to his work being considered in the light of serious art; but those who put forward this plea forget that a sketch, properly so called, embodies within itself some of the highest qualities of graphic art. Rapidity, decision, the power of selection, and the greatest of all artistic attributes, sincerity, can only be the outcome of patient, plodding, and earnest application. A sketch is a concentrated essence, and a few simple lines or washes from the hand of a master suggest instinctively to the beholder the *motif* of the picture, where the floundering efforts of the amateur entirely fail, for mere rapidity unguided by the *feu sacré* of the true and experienced artist can never produce a "sketch." So it is with Downman. The use of the stump in the shadows, drapery, &c., undoubtedly tends to rapidity of production, but where his would-be imitators entirely fail, is in the refined elegance and pure beauty of the simple tints and scanty touches, by which the master's hand can give us the lovely women and handsome men that we owe to the magic of his pencil.

It is not easy to guess why he by preference drew the profile. Every human face differs in its points; and surely all are not seen at their best in a profile view, but we must leave what we cannot explain, and accept these

portraits as amongst the most tender and refined that the prolific renaissance of the late 18th century has left to us.

In spite, however, of the growing appreciation of these drawings to which I have alluded, one curious inconsistency still attaches to their monetary value. I refer to the fact that almost without exception the reproductions from the originals, of which there are many copies of each, have hitherto fetched a higher price than the originals, of which there can be but one. The reason for this is hard to find ; it is one of the vagaries of fashion ; but it is an inconsistency which surely has only to be pointed out to be rectified.

Attention may be directed here to the following Downman drawings in the Exhibition, which illustrate him at his best :—No. 51, Miss Sarah Whitmore ; No. 112, Princess Augusta ; No. 114, Portrait of a Lady ; No. 120, Queen Charlotte ; and No. 18, Lady Lavinia Gosford.

With regard to Richard Cosway, it would seem to be almost superfluous to speak. For he has been the subject of so much literary comment, especially of late, that it is difficult to add anything fresh to a story that has been so thoroughly and frequently told.

Of all the leaders of the great school of miniaturists of the 18th century, the name of Cosway has ever been the one to conjure with. At a time when the Plimers were almost unknown, the Englehearts but a tradition, and William Wood had never even been heard of, the possessor of any third-rate grandmother, painted “in little,” could solemnly assure the listening world that the work in question was by Cosway ! Surely the poor little

man would have often turned uneasily in his grave, could he but contemplate the villainous offspring that ignorance attempted to father upon him. All that is altered now, and there should be little difficulty in correctly ascribing any specimen that presents itself.

With regard to one branch of his art-work that forms a feature of the present collection, he may almost be said to be its inventor. The full-length figure, drawn with a lead pencil, and, as a rule, only the face worked up in colour to the perfection of a miniature, forms to my mind one of the most attractive varieties of Cosway's art, as it is probably one of the rarest.

As instances, I may note No. 13, George, Prince of Wales ; No. 17, A Study ; and Nos. 42 and 48.

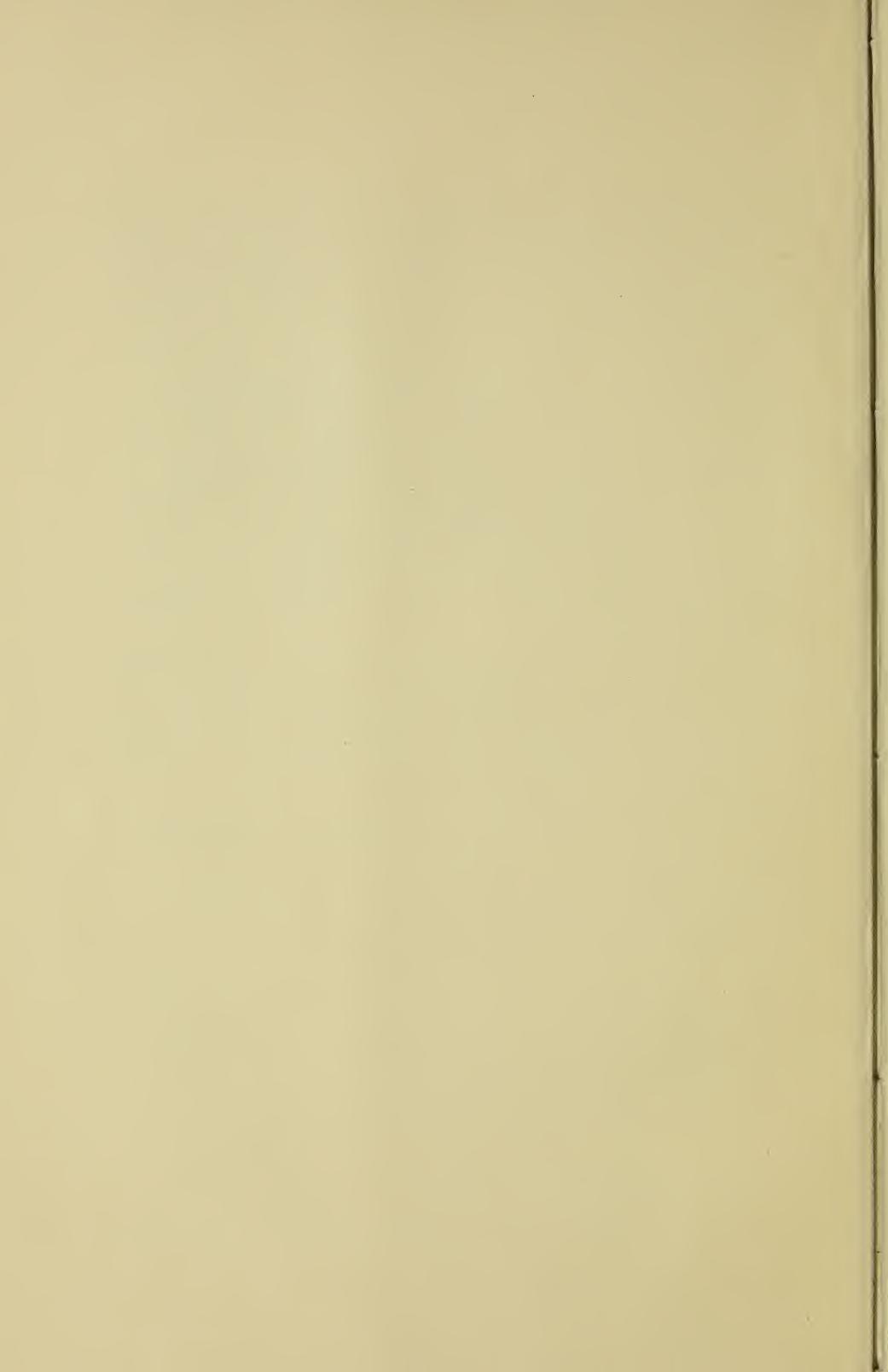
Passing from the work of these two artists, I cannot but allude to one specimen which deserves a few words to itself. I allude to No. 45, a chalk drawing of a lady in a large hat. When it was first shown to me, and my opinion was asked as to the probable painter, one name seemed at once to rise in my mind, viz., "Gainsborough." I was informed that the drawing was obtained in Paris, from an old French family, who still have in their possession portraits of their ancestors by Reynolds and Gainsborough. This fact tends to confirm the first supposition as to the probable artist, and it certainly bears characteristic touches of the great master. Be this as it may, one thing is certain : whatever hand traced its lovely lines, it represents a most beautiful example of 18th century portraiture in that medium.

I have written so much, and so often, concerning the miniatures of the last century, that it is superfluous to say

anything as to the collection here shown, a glance at which will convince the visitor to the exhibition of its quality and comprehensiveness. But a word must be said concerning the marvellously delicate works of John Smart, an artist who hitherto has not perhaps been classed in the same category with the first painters in little, although within the past few days a specimen from his brush has commanded a very high price under the hammer. I would draw attention to the marvellous manipulation exhibited in any one of the specimens here shown, notably in Nos. 197 to 199, and ask whether anything approaching it has ever emanated from the brush of a miniaturist in this or any other country, Petitot even not excepted.

Lastly must come a word as to the very remarkable A. Plimer, namely, "Lady Ravensworth, Lady Paul, and Miss Simpson," which is only rivalled in importance by the celebrated example of that artist now in Lord Iveagh's possession.

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165. LADY, wearing white dress, and a white ribbon in hair. By A. PLIMER. With initials R.E. on reverse.

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183. A LADY, her hair bound with a white fillet, and wearing a white dress. By RICHARD COSWAY, R.A.

184. A Miniature of ADMIRAL LORD RODNEY. By G. ENGLEHEART. Diamond frame.

185. A LADY, powdered hair, white frilled dress and blue sash. By G. ENGLEHEART.

186, 189. THE MISSES BERRY, the friends of Horace Walpole (*two miniatures*), with powdered hair and wearing pale blue dresses. By G. ENGLEHEART. Diamond frames. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures."

187. A LADY, wearing a striped dress, seated on couch, with dove. Pearl frame.

188. MRS. GROYNU, wearing white dress. By G. ENGLEHEART. Pearl frame.

190. MRS. ELIZABETH YOUNG, afterwards MRS. POPE, wearing a white dress and blue hair band. By G. ENGLEHEART. Pearl frame.

191. A LADY, wearing a white and yellow dress, with blue sash and powdered hair. By G. ENGLEHEART. Diamond frame. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures."

192. MISS NEWCOMBE, wearing white dress. By G. ENGLEHEART. Filigree diamond frame.

193. MRS. ROBINSON, wearing a white dress and blue ribbon, with powdered hair. By G. ENGLEHEART. Diamond frame. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures."

194. LADY DORCHESTER. By J. SMART. Signed and dated.

195. MRS. ROBINSON (PERDITA). Painted by THEOPHILA PALMER.

196. A LADY, wearing red dress, with black neck ribbon. By R. COSWAY, R.A.

197. A LADY, with powdered hair and veil, wearing a blue robe trimmed with ermine. Signed J. SMART. Diamond frame. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures."

198. A LADY, wearing a white dress, with ribbon in hair. Painted by J. SMART. Signed and dated 1871. Diamond frame. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures."

250.0.0 199. THE SECOND MRS. ST. AUBYN, wearing a blue dress. By J. SMART. Signed and dated 1785. Diamond frame. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures." 250.0.0

200. A LADY, with powdered hair, wearing a white dress, blue edged. By J. SMART. Diamond frame. Illustrated in Williamson's "Portrait Miniatures."

201. MADAME LE MAC, mother of Mrs. Bayly, wearing a violet dress. Mounted in gold box.

202. DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE. By J. SMART. Diamond frame.

203. A Small Miniature of A LADY. By J. SMART. Mounted as a ring, surrounded by diamonds.

204. ROSAMOND DIXIE, daughter of Sir William Dixie, Bart. By J. SMART. Diamond frame.

205. A Miniature of HENRY FREDERICK, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND. In pearl and diamond frame.

206. LADY STUART. By N. HONE. Pearl frame.

207. MADAME BELMONT AS FOUCHAN (the hurdygurdy player), wearing a brown dress, blue and white cap. ~~2. 10. 0~~

208. LADY, wearing large hat and holding flowers. Circular miniature.

209. LADY, wearing large hat and mauve dress. By DUMONT. Gold and silver frame.

210. A LADY. By HALL. Pearl and enamel frame.

211. SHEPHERD AND SHEPHERDESS IN LANDSCAPE. By CHARLIER.

212. MADAME POLIGNAC AND CHILD. Pearl frame.

213. NYMPHS AT FOUNTAIN. By CHARLIER.

214. VENUS AND CUPID, WITH NYMPHS SEATED ON CLOUDS. By CHARLIER.

215. VENUS DISARMING CUPID. By BOUCHER.

216. LA TOILETTE. Signed V. BLARENBERGHE, 1780.

217. LADY AND CHILD. Pearl frame.

218. LADY HAMILTON, with blue and white head-dress.

219. A LADY, in blue robe, holding a dove. Circular French miniature.

220. MADAME VILLIERS, with flowers in hair.

221. An Enamel of MRS. VERNON. Diamond frame.

222. LA PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE AND CHILD. By HALL.
Signed and dated 1786. Pearl frame.

223. LADY, wearing blue bodice and pearl necklace, in a wreath of flowers.

224. PORTRAIT OF A DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV., wearing white dress, green sash, and purple scarf. By DUMONT.

225. TWO LADIES AND A GENTLEMAN.

226. LADY, with curly brown hair, and wearing embroidered yellow robes. Signed PENNEQUIN.

IN TABLE CASE.

227. MRS. HENRY CHAMBERS. A large miniature. By SAMUEL SHELLEY, 1797.

228. A LADY, with high head-dress. By RICHARD COSWAY, R.A.

5885.00

229. MILDHAM, EARL OF WESTMORELAND.

230. EARL DE LA WARRE.

231. LA PRINCESSE DE JOINVILLE. By LARRIEU. 1805. Satin wood frame, ormolu mounts.

232. GEORGE IV. Enamel. By H. BONE, R.A.

ENGRAVINGS.

IN CENTRE ROOM.

16.0.0 233. GEORGE FERRERS TOWNSHEND, EARL OF LEICESTER. P. CONDÉ. (Three states and alterations in one frame.) After R. COSWAY, R.A.

234. MRS. PORTER. By NUGENT. After J. HOPPNER, R.A..

235. LADY GERTRUDE FITZPATRICK. Painted and Engraved by C. WILKIN.

236. GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES, with proof and alteration. (Three in one frame.) After R. COSWAY, R.A.

16.0.0 237. MRS. JERNINGHAM. 2.8.0

238. MISS DUNCANON, WEARING LARGE HAT. After JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A.

239. MME. PARISOT. E. TURNER. After MASUERIER. Coloured.

240. MRS. COWLEY. JAMES FITTLER. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

241. MAJOR-GENERAL FERGUSON. T. S. AGAR. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

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26

666-8-0

242. YOUTH. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A. After R. COSWAY, R.A.
243. LADY AS A GIPSY. AGAR. After R. COSWAY, R.A.
244. DUKE OF YORK. G. HADFIELD. After R. COSWAY, R.A.
245. GENTLEMEN WEARING COURT COSTUME. CARDON.
246. A MILITARY OFFICER. R. COOPER. After R. COSWAY,
R.A.

20.0.0 247- CAROLINE PRINCESS OF WALES. Coloured.

3.0.0

248. H.R.H. PRINCESS ROYAL. P. W. TOMKINS. After
R. H. RAMBERG.

60.0.0 { 249
252 } - THE SEASONS. Coloured. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A.
254
257

9.0.0

250. MME. RECAMIER. CARDON. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

20.0.0 251- MARIA COSWAY, SEATED BY TREE. After R. COSWAY,
R.A.

3.0.0

253. LADY DIANA SINCLAIR. M. BOVI. After R. COSWAY,
R.A.

255. MRS. TICKELL. P. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

256. DUCHESS OF RICHMOND. After JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A.

12.0.0 258- HON. ANNE DAMAR. T. RYDER. After A. KAUFFMAN. 1.16.0

259. MRS. DICKSON. Coloured. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY,
R.A.

15.0.0 260- ANNE COUNTESS COWPER. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A. After
W. HAMILTON, R.A. 2.6.0

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261. CAROLINE PRINCESS OF WALES AND PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.
F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

262. LORD FITZGIBBON. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A. After R.
COSWAY, R.A.

263. LADY HEATHCOTE.

264. DUCHESSE DE NIVERNAIS. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A.

265. HARRIET VISCOUNTESS BULKELEY. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A.
After R. COSWAY, R.A.

266. WHAT'S THAT, MOTHER? AGAR and BLACK. After A.
BUCK. 15.0

267. ELIZABETH WOODVILLE'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH
EDWARD IV. Drawing and Proof Engraving of same
by Conde. RICHARD COSWAY, R.A. 12.15.0

268. LE COMTE DE LUSI. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A.

269. JOHN, EARL OF CLONMEL. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY,
R.A.

270. MR. AND MRS. COSWAY. R. THEU. After R. COSWAY,
R.A. 2.5.0

271. MRS. BALDWIN IN GRECIAN COSTUME. F. BARTOLOZZI,
R.A. After R. COSWAY, R.A. 2.5.0

272. PRINCESS AMELIA. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A. After Sir
THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A. 1.10.0

273. PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A.
After R. COSWAY, R.A.

274. J. L. DUSSEK. P. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

6178.0.0 275. LUIGI MARCHESI. SCHIAVONETTI. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

276. ARTHUR MARQUIS OF DEVONSHIRE. CONDÉ. (Two.) After R. COSWAY, R.A.

277. GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES. W. SHARP. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

278. MARQUIS OF DEVONSHIRE AND LORD ARTHUR HILL. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

279. SIR JOHN HENRY MOORE, BART. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

280. PORTRAIT OF A LADY WITH COW. T. AGAR. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

281. MRS. CROUCH. After ROMNEY.

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10.0.0 285. MRS. JACKSON. P. CONDÉ. After R. COSWAY, R.A. 1-10.0

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8.0.0 287. JOHN GEORGE COUNT BROWNE. G. HADFIELD. After R. COSWAY, R.A. 1-4.0

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291. HARRIET VISCOUNTESS BULKELEY. F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

292. LADY YARMOUTH. A. CHARDON. After R. COSWAY, R.A.

293. MRS. SIDDONS. P. H. TOMKINS. After JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A.

294. LADY THEODOSIA CRADOCK. A. FRESCHI. AFTER R. COSWAY, R.A.

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COSWAY, R.A.

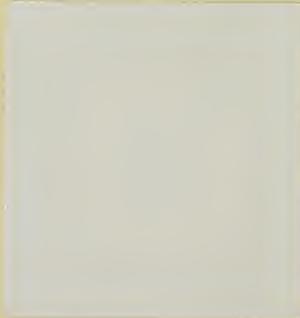
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